

July 2005

Teaming up to fight childhood obesity

It was an interesting day recently at a public school in New York City when two guys from Hope held an event that received extensive national publicity. Former President Clinton and I joined forces with the American Heart Association in a school gymnasium to unveil a plan to address one of the nation's leading public health threats -- childhood obesity. The Heart Association hopes the 10-year effort will slow the increasing rates of childhood obesity across the country and encourage healthier lifestyles among young people. We'll work with the food and restaurant industry to improve the quality of food products while developing marketing strategies to support changes in the industry. We'll try to increase

the physical activity among students and improve the nutrition in schools across the country. We'll work with the media to see how we can best encourage young people to have healthier lifestyles. The program will provide tools that allow health-care providers to better recognize, prevent and treat obesity in children. And it will provide information to parents to help them incorporate heart-healthy activities into their family routines.

President Clinton called me this spring to ask if I would be a part of the American Heart Association effort. He feels that what we're doing in this state with the Healthy Arkansas program is on the cutting edge of health policy. Based on those efforts and my own pilgrimage toward a healthier life, I was asked to participate and delighted to accept the



Gov. Mike Huckabee, in a partnership with the American Heart Association and former President Clinton, spoke at Public School 128 in New York City about a 10-year plan to address childhood obesity.

invitation. Due to his personal experience with heart disease, President Clinton is now driven to help children make wise lifestyle choices that will prevent them from developing chronic diseases. My experience with Type 2 diabetes, meanwhile, has caused me to have a similar passion for ensuring that children aren't faced with chronic diseases. The best way to prevent diseases in adults is to cultivate healthy habits in children. There now are more than twice as many children -- and almost three times as many teenagers --

Arkansas students participated in the annual Great Arkansas Workout at the state Capitol. The students were joined by a number of media personalities and coaches from across the state. This is the 12th year the event has been held in Arkansas.

overweight than in 1980. If this trend continues, it will cut two to five years from the average lifespan. It's indeed a crisis -- a crisis every leader in this country is obligated to address.

This effort isn't focused just on kids who already are overweight. It's about getting all kids to take control of their health while creating a life-long philosophy that emphasizes balance, better nutrition and increased activity. On the same day President Clinton and I were making the announcement in New York, hundreds of Arkansas students were on the lawn of the state Capitol at Little Rock participating in the Great Arkansas Workout. This annual

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Continuing to keep Arkansas beautiful

Janet and I were deeply honored to be the first recipients of the Carl Garner-Al Pollard Lifetime Achievement Award from the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission. Five years ago, the commission honored Carl Garner and Al Pollard for their devotion to improving the health of our people and the beauty of this state. They were the



Gov. Mike Huckabee and first lady Janet Huckabee received their Lifetime Achievement Award from namesake Carl Garner.

pioneers in preserving and promoting environmental excellence in communities across the Natural State long before that was the hip thing to do. Janet and I have a deep appreciation and respect for their leadership and exceptional service in the areas of litter prevention, recycling and scenic beautification. Like Al Pollard and Carl Garner, Janet and I have a passion for Arkansas.

In 1995, the year before I became governor, the Legislature put a proposed constitutional amendment on the ballot to create a sales tax of one-eighth of a cent. Proceeds would be used for conservation purposes. One of the first things I did after becoming governor in 1996 was to embrace that effort. If the funding isn't dedicated, conservation programs are the first to go in tight budget times. The efforts of a lot of people were rewarded on Nov. 5, 1996,



with the passage of what's now Amendment 75 to the Arkansas Constitution.

I'm hopeful more families and businesses will become active in the

Keep Arkansas Beautiful program. The folks at Keep Arkansas Beautiful can give you tips on planting wildflowers, becoming a part of the adopt-a-highway program and many other things. We need to remember our heritage is more than historic buildings, arts and crafts. The natural beauty of Arkansas is a large part of who we are as a state. Take time to look around you and see how God has blessed us.

HOFNOD program still growing in 10th year

After becoming governor in 1996, one of the first programs I helped launch was the Hooked On Fishing-Not On Drugs initiative. This program is a joint effort between the governor's office, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the state Department of Education. A lot of Arkansans have worked hard to make our effort, now commonly known just as HOFNOD, the top program of its type in the country. This program not only



Fishing poles are provided to the students participating in their schools' derbies.

teaches students an activity they can enjoy the remainder of their lives, it provides them an environmental education, teaches healthy living skills and promotes self-esteem. It's a natural in a state that calls itself the Natu-

ral State.

Anyone who knows me knows I'm an avid fisherman. But even if I weren't an outdoorsman, I would be in love with this program. HOFNOD emphasizes the importance of relationships between responsible adults and students. We try to hook up with local fishing clubs, whose members understand that outdoor activities can keep kids out of trouble. As Ron Duncan, the famed counselor at Central Junior High School in Springdale, always says: "You can take your troubles fishing and leave them behind." The program encourages students to set and reach goals, make good decisions and then take responsibility for those decisions. This school-based program meets the fifth through eighth-grade frameworks established by the Department of Education. Subjects covered include fish anatomy and identification, fish habitat and water ecology. Teachers must attend training workshops



before implementing the program. We're giving children a chance to truly be successful at something. For some of them, it's the first time in their lives they've experienced success. You only have to attend a HOFNOD event and see the smile on the face of a child catching that first fish to realize what this program means. Teachers tell me they've watched students who were abusing drugs, making poor grades and having problems at home turn their lives around through this program.

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Another successful Arkansas Heritage Month



Gov. Mike Huckabee helped kick off Heritage Month at the Historic Arkansas Museum where the design for the poster (shown right) was unveiled.

In state government, we're doing our best to protect this state's natural treasures through agencies such as the Department of Arkansas Heritage, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the Department of Parks and Tourism.

This past May was Arkansas Heritage month. The theme was "Arkansas Gardens: The Roots Of Our Heritage." For generations, the people of this state have reaped the benefits of large gardens producing fruits and vegetables. These gardens have

provided Arkansans with a sense of accomplishment, relaxation and purpose.

Of course, we weren't just celebrating Arkansas gardens. Arkansas Heritage Month allowed us to celebrate the full range of the state's heritage. At the Historic Arkansas Museum, horticulturists and architects are transforming the yard of the historic Brownlee House. There will be a detached kitchen, a smokehouse, a privy and gardens growing cabbages and kale. It will look much like what the Brownlee family would have known in 1848. Noted land-

scape historian C. Allan Brown will work with the museum's team of experts to finalize the plans for the garden. Brown has a national reputation, and we're lucky to have him working with us at the Historic Arkansas Museum. Volunteers such as Mary Fletcher Worthen have kept up the garden for more than three decades. If you haven't been to the Historic Arkansas Museum lately, you owe it to yourself and your children to pay a visit.

The Arkansas Heritage Month theme -- The Roots Of Our Heritage -- also helped us realize how deep our roots go. Native Americans, African-Americans, Europeans, Hispanics and Asian-Americans all have played roles in making Arkansas what it is today. The concept of a garden is appropriate. A garden grows and blossoms. By the same token, we've seen Arkansas finally begin to become all she can be. I hope you'll take the time in the months ahead to celebrate the musical influences, folk arts, fine arts, social history and political history of Arkansas.



This year's Heritage Month poster was designed by Gloria Garrison of Russellville.

HOFNOD

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Let me tell you about a few of the HOFNOD programs across the state. At Mountain View Middle School, the program is in its eighth year. Teachers Ron Willis, Michelle Turner and Lesia Morris work with almost 400 students from the fifth through the eighth grade. They have so many members that they have to split them into groups and take four days in May for their spring fishing derby. Fortunately, the pond they use is just across the street from the school. In fact, I was in Mountain View several years ago when they dedicated that pond. The Mountain View fishing derbies are always huge community efforts with numerous lo-

cal volunteers and donors. At Mineral Springs Elementary School down in southwest Arkansas, teachers Janet Mattice, Laurel McCarter and Jeanie Gorham are in their second year of serving students in the fifth and sixth grades. Students there recycled more than 700 pounds of paper in the fall as a community service project. They also took a field trip to a state fish hatchery near Hot Springs. Both fall and spring fishing derbies were held at the school. The students have even created an outdoor classroom on their campus.



With the help of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and program directors Kevin Wardlow and Brenda Early, students from the Cabot School District participated in their fishing derby earlier this year.

At Mena Middle School, counselor Janice Whorton and several teachers directed a second-year program for sixth-grade students. The students took a field trip to Cossatot River

State Park to learn from its interactive exhibits. They also recycled paper and printer cartridges as a community service project. If you know a school that might be interested, please call the HOFNOD office and let the folks there know. The number is (501) 223-6313.

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hear
from
you

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battling obesity

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event focuses on the importance of regular physical activity in children. The national program on which it's based was developed

by California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger back when he headed the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. We're hoping these students will make such activities part of their daily routine and convince their friends to do the same.

The New York event also came just three days after the annual three-mile Walk For Diabetes in Little Rock, which I was honored to chair this year. The event featured youth activities, a health and fitness fair and a light breakfast. In the process, we raised money for the American Diabetes Association. There are 18.2 million Americans with diabetes -- 1.5 million with Type 1 diabetes and 16.7 million with Type 2 diabetes. The American Diabetes Association funds research and

information activities. The walk is symbolic since studies show that walking helps control weight, helps prevent Type 2 diabetes and helps manage the disease in those who already have diabetes. As you can see, we're working with the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association and many others as we attempt to ensure that our Healthy Arkansas initiative reaches everyone in our state. Working together, we can convince all Arkansans to adopt a culture of health.



Students from a New York City school performed a jump rope demonstration as Gov. Mike Huckabee and former President Bill Clinton look on.

